

YARD WASTE REMINDER STATE LAW REQUIRES USE OF COMPOSTABLE BAGS



The plastic bags typically used to collect fall leaves are no longer accepted by garbage haulers in Bloomington.

In 2010, a new state law went into effect, requiring all metro-area residents to use compostable bags for yard waste. All seven metro counties are included.

Why use compostable bags? Compostable bags, unlike typical plastic bags, biodegrade or naturally break down at compost sites, creating less waste.

The new law applies to all residents who bag their yard waste for pickup. Those who don't have yard waste or who choose to compost their waste themselves will not be affected.

Haulers are required to leave behind yard waste that has been collected in non-compostable plastic yard bags.

Compostable bags are available at most retail stores.

For more information, contact Hennepin County Environmental Services at 612-348-3777 or desmail@co.hennepin.mn.us.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: COMPOSTABLE BAGS.

DID YOU KNOW? COMPOSTING FOR A HEALTHY YARD



Don't feel like bagging up all those mounds of raked leaves and clumps of grass clippings? Compost them instead. Think of it as a resource – one that will help keep your flowers blooming and your yard healthy and beautiful, year after year.

For more information on composting, visit www.rethinkrecycling.com.

Whether it's saving energy or guarding Bloomington's precious natural resources, Earth Action Heroes make a difference. Here are your neighbors in action...

EARTH ACTION HEROES THE CREEKSIDE WOODWORKERS

There are more than 50 members who use the Creekside Community Center wood shop; some come a few times a year, some a few times a week. Most don't know each other outside of Creekside, yet they all have at least two things in common: the badge they wear around their necks indicating they are authorized to use the powerful saws in the shop and their use of recycled wood.

Stan Cramer, *pictured second from right*, is a leader in the wood shop. He's spent every Thursday for the past 20 years there, volunteering his time to repair tables, chairs, doors and other wooden items for Creekside. Cramer also makes his own jewelry boxes and puzzles.

Cramer's most recent project, which he collaborated on with Ed Spot and Creekside Coordinator Sean O'Neil, included repairing and creating wood duck houses for Parks Maintenance to install in and around City parks.

"There is a lot of measuring and cutting involved in birdhouses," Cramer said. "I had to call the University of Minnesota to find out exactly the right size holes to make to attract bluebirds."

Cramer and Spot spent nearly three days on the wood duck houses project.



"We're always working on something different and it's sustainable because we're reusing material."

They already have their next project lined up, repairing the wooden obstacles used to train Bloomington Police dogs.

"I enjoy it here because we're always working on something different and it's sustainable because we're reusing materials," Cramer said.

Yet Cramer is quick to add that the work is not always easy.

"This is hard work – 90 percent of woodworking is measuring and planning before you cut," Cramer said. "A lot of guys don't take the time to do the prep work."

Lenn Lacher, *pictured center*, started visiting the wood shop when he retired in 2004. He can be found there three or four days a week working on various projects. Lacher enters his creations in the senior crafts contest at the State Fair every year. Last year he won a blue ribbon.

"People throw out so many things that they could easily fix," Lacher said.

"I take wood scraps from people all the time and make them into something."

Stop by the Creekside Boutique and you're sure to find one of Harold Gustafson's wooden Easter crosses, *pictured at left*. Gustafson carves the crosses in just two or three hours using wood he acquires from various family members. Gustafson's most recent creation was made using a large piece of black walnut.

"I got this wood from my brother-in-law," Gustafson said. "He was going to burn it."

David Kesler, *pictured second from left*, has been using the wood shop for five years. He once made a coffee table for his living room using a pair of old closet doors he found during the City's Curbside Cleanup.

The wood may be used, but it's anything but old. Once these woodworkers are done with it, whether it's used to make birdhouses, sellable crafts, or furniture, discarded wood will find new life at the Creekside wood shop.

RIISING TO THE SURFACE FILAMENTOUS ALGAE APPEAR ON CITY LAKES AND PONDS

They may not be pretty, but filamentous algae are important to the health of Bloomington's water bodies.

Filamentous algae provide habitat for small animals such as aquatic insects, snails, and scuds, which are valuable fish food.

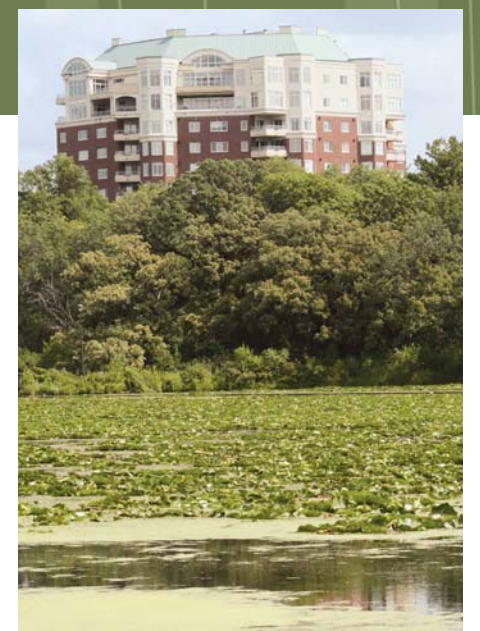
What exactly are filamentous algae? Sometimes called "pond scum," filamentous algae are masses of long, stringy, green or brown strands found in ponds, shorelines and backwaters.

This summer, a combination of factors, including low lake levels, water clarity and water temperature has produced a large population of filamentous algae. Their growth begins on submerged objects on the pond bottom. As they grow, algae produce oxygen that becomes entrapped by the algae mat. This

provides buoyancy, floating the algae to the surface, where they frequently cover large areas of the pond.

Although it may not be pleasing in appearance and in rare cases may cause odor problems, filamentous algae do not produce toxins and do not pose a health threat. They are often a persistent problem because algae reproduce rapidly and have a 30- to 60-day life cycle. The amount of algae in a lake or pond depends on the nutrient levels, particularly phosphorus, in the water.

Bloomington's lakes and ponds are a source of pride and beauty for the entire community. The City has practices and policies to improve water quality and preserve beneficial uses of wetlands, including recreation and wildlife habitat.



For more information, call Bloomington Engineering Technician Bryan Gruidl at 952-563-4557 or visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website at www.dnr.state.mn.us.